

## Psycholinguistic Approaches to Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency through Comic Strips

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### Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of using comic strips as a psycholinguistic approach to enhance Arabic speaking proficiency (*maharat al-kalam*) among students. Traditional methods of teaching Arabic often emphasize grammar memorization, which can disengage students and hinder their ability to apply the language in spoken contexts. In contrast, comic strips provide a visual and narrative framework that makes learning more engaging, promoting better vocabulary retention and comprehension of sentence structures. Quantitative data was gathered through pre-tests, post-tests, and speaking tasks, while qualitative data was obtained from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results showed significant improvement in the experimental group in terms of vocabulary retention, sentence structure comprehension, and speaking confidence. The visual and contextual elements of comic strips helped students internalize the language more effectively. Additionally. However, some challenges were noted in understanding cultural contexts within the comic strips. Notably, while comics are typically used to motivate and enhance *maharat al-qiro'ah* (reading skills), this study found that they can also be effectively applied to improve *maharat al-kalam* (speaking skills) through the incorporation of Arabic vocabulary and a

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psycholinguistic approach. This study concludes that comic strips offer a valuable and innovative tool for enhancing Arabic speaking proficiency, providing both cognitive and motivational benefits.

**Keywords:** Psycholinguistics; Arabic speaking proficiency; vocabulary; structures; student motivation

## Introduction

Arabic plays a crucial role not only in religion and knowledge but also in psychology by influencing emotional and cognitive connections<sup>1</sup>. For Muslims, Arabic fosters a deep emotional bond through spiritual practices, creating a sense of identity and belonging<sup>2</sup>. Psychologically, learning Arabic strengthens cultural empathy<sup>3</sup> and cognitive flexibility by engaging with its complex structure, enhancing problem-solving skills and intellectual growth. Furthermore, in international relations<sup>4</sup>, mastering Arabic fosters better communication<sup>5</sup> and cultural understanding, reducing biases and building stronger, more cooperative relationships. These blend of cognitive and emotional development makes Arabic a powerful tool for holistic personal and professional enrichment<sup>6</sup>. The learning of Arabic, particularly in developing maharat al-kalam (speaking skills), often poses challenges for students due to the complexity of its grammar and vocabulary<sup>7</sup>. Traditional approaches that focus

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<sup>1</sup> Rima Alhaider, Merle Mahon, and Chris Donlan, "The Influence of Language On The Formation of Number Concepts: Evidence From Preschool Children Who Are Bilingual In English And Arabic," *Journal Of Experimental Child Psychology* 246 (October 2024): 105988, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2024.105988>.

<sup>2</sup> Noora Al Roken and Gerassimos Barlas, "Multimodal Arabic Emotion Recognition Using Deep Learning," *Speech Communication* 155 (November 2023): 103005, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.specom.2023.103005>.

<sup>3</sup> Manel Dallagi-Belkilani, Marie Olivier, And Chrystel Besche-Richard, "Validation Of The Basic Empathy Scale In An Arabic-Speaking Population: The Bes-Ar," *L'encéphale* 50, No. 2 (April 2024): 149–53, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.encep.2023.04.002>.

<sup>4</sup> Rois Hidayah Darajat and Zukhaira Zukhaira, "The Development Of Lauhul Qilab (Flip Chart) Media For The Introduction Of Arabic Vocabularies To Students At Kindergarten/Ra/Pengembangan Media Lauhul Qilab (Flip Chart) Untuk Pengenalan Kosakata Bahasa Arab Pada Anak Tk/Ra," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 5, No. 1 (May 7, 2021): 23, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v5i1.1966>.

<sup>5</sup> Germine Awad et al., "Foundations for An Arab/Mena Psychology," *Journal Of Humanistic Psychology* 62, No. 4 (July 2022): 591–613, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00221678211060974>.

<sup>6</sup> Said Elaiwat, "Holistic Word Descriptor for Lexicon Reduction In Handwritten Arabic Documents," *Pattern Recognition* 119 (November 2021): 108072, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patcog.2021.108072>.

<sup>7</sup> Fina Aunul Kafi Et Al., "Utilization of Deep Structure To Develop Language Performance of Arabic Language Learners At The Fundamental Level Of Mahārah Al-Kalām (Adaptive Study Of Noam Chomsky's Thought)," In *In International Conference On Law, Technology, Spirituality And Society (Icoless)* (International Conference On Law, Technology, Spirituality And

on memorizing grammar rules are often less effective in motivating students. In this context, psycholinguistics provides new insights into how students process language through visual aids<sup>8</sup>, comic strips combine storytelling and muhadatsah, which researchers believe is an effective strategy to enhance maharat al-kalam<sup>9</sup> and also can enhance vocabulary retention and sentence structure comprehension. Comic strips offer visual and narrative contexts that support active and engaging learning<sup>10</sup>, making them a potential tool to improve speaking skills in Arabic. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of comic strips in helping students develop vocabulary and sentence structures to enhance their maharat al-kalam. In recent decades, psycholinguistic approaches to language learning have garnered significant attention by visual<sup>11</sup>, particularly in the context of languages with complex grammatical systems, such as Arabic<sup>12</sup>. The complexity of Arabic grammar often poses substantial challenges for students, especially when learning it as a foreign language. Students frequently struggle with mastering fundamental elements of the language, such as verb conjugation and sentence structure, which are not only grammatically intricate but also heavily influenced by cultural context<sup>13</sup>. The use of teaching methods in learning Arabic plays a significant role in attracting students' interest in learning<sup>14,15</sup>, therefore, a teaching method is needed that is not only linguistically effective but also engaging and supportive of continuous learning. This study

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Society (Icoless), International Conference On Law, Technology, Spirituality And Society (Icoless), 2023), 267–80.

<sup>8</sup> Renni Hasibuan et al., “Game-Based Language Learning: Implementing Arabic Speaking Proficiency Through Truth or Dare with Spin Wheel,” *Lughawiyah: Journal of Arabic Education And Linguistics* 6, No. 1 (June 29, 2024): 16, <https://doi.org/10.31958/lughawiyah.v6i1.12224>.

<sup>9</sup> Mahfuz Rizqi Mubarak et al., “Zoom Cloud Meeting: Media Alternatif Dalam Pembelajaran Maharah Kalam Di Tengah Wabah Virus Corona (Covid-19),” *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 2 (November 17, 2020): 211, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v4i2.1445>.

<sup>10</sup> Eka Anastasia Wijaya et al., “Comic Strips for Language Teaching: The Benefits And Challenges According To Recent Research,” *Eternal (English, Teaching, Learning, And Research Journal)* 7, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 230, <https://doi.org/10.24252/eternal.v7i1.2021.a16>.

<sup>11</sup> Himelhoch Luz-Aydé, “Native and Non-Native English-Speaking Doctoral Students’ Strategies to Understand Idiomatics in Comics and Comic Strips” (University of South Florida, 2021), <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd/9173>.

<sup>12</sup> Aline Godfroid And Holger Hopp, *the routledge handbook of second language acquisition and psycholinguistics* (routledge, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Oweini, Ghada M. Awada, and Fatima s. Kaissi, “effects of diglossia on classical arabic: language developments in bilingual learners,” *gema online® journal of language studies* 20, no. 2 (may 22, 2020): 188–202, <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2020-2002-11>.

<sup>14</sup> Amila Sholiha et al., “the effect of mnemonic method with a deductive approach in shorof learning on students learning outcomes,” *arabiyatuna: jurnal bahasa arab* 7, no. 2 november (november 17, 2023): 525, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i2.7607>.

<sup>15</sup> Siti Nadia, “The Effectiveness Of Comic Strips On The Students` Idiomatic Expression Mastery At The Second Grade Of The Ma Al Ikhlahiyah Perampuan In Academic” (State Islamic University Of Mataram, 2022).

explores the use of comic strips as an effective pedagogical tool to enhance vocabulary acquisition and sentence structure comprehension in Arabic language learning, particularly in the development of speaking proficiency (*maharat al-kalam*). Unlike prior research, which broadly focuses on visual aids, this study takes a more focused approach by analyzing the role of comic strips through a psycholinguistic framework. By addressing the gaps in current methodologies, this research seeks to determine how comic strips, with their ability to provide both visual and narrative contexts, can offer a more engaging and accessible method for teaching Arabic. Specifically, this study will answer two key questions: how comic strips can effectively enhance speaking proficiency, and what unique challenges they can help overcome compared to traditional grammar-based methods<sup>16</sup>.

Speaking proficiency (*maharat al-kalam*) is one of the most challenging aspects of learning Arabic, particularly due to its complex grammar, which affects sentence structures<sup>17</sup>. In many cases, traditional teaching methods tend to focus on memorizing vocabulary and grammar but often neglect the effective development of speaking skills. This makes it difficult for students to apply Arabic in everyday conversations. While several studies have discussed the use of comics in language learning to enhance vocabulary, research that specifically addresses the use of comic strips to improve Arabic speaking proficiency remains scarce.

Learning involves mastering and acquiring knowledge of a subject or skill through study, experience, or instruction. It is a process aimed at helping students learn effectively. Successful learning occurs through active interaction and communication between teachers and students. However, limitations in delivering material and a lack of supporting media can lead to boredom and hinder students' ability to absorb the content<sup>18</sup>. The approach of using comic strips in language learning has emerged as a promising alternative solution to address this problem. Comic strips, with their unique ability to combine visual and textual elements<sup>19</sup>, allow students to connect words and sentences in a

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<sup>16</sup> Menik Mahmudah, Nurul Murtadho, And Hanik Mahliatussikah, 'Tathwir Kitan al-Balaghah al-Dirasi bi Istikhdami al-Kharithah al-Zihniyyah li Qism al-Adab al-Arabi Jami'ah Malang al-Hukumiyah,' *al-arabi: journal of teaching arabic as a foreign language arabic department, faculty of letters, universitas negeri malang (um)* 1, no. 2 (2018).

<sup>17</sup> Aizzatin Habibah, Syihabuddin Syihabuddin, And Yayan Nurbayan, "menumbuhkan cinta bahasa arab dengan bi'ah 'arabiyyah di pondok pesantren," *arabi: journal of arabic studies* 7, no. 2 (december 21, 2022): 251–62, <https://doi.org/10.24865/ajas.v7i2.332>.

<sup>18</sup> Rini, Hazuar, And Shanti Novita, "arabic learning media design based on the mit app inventor application," *lughawiyat: jurnal pendidikan babasa dan sastra arab* 7, no. 1 (april 25, 2024): 18–35, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyat.v7i1.1488>.

<sup>19</sup> Umi Hijriyah et al., "development of digital comic media for learning qira'ah for fifth grade students of madrasah ibtidaiyah," *arabiyatuna: jurnal babasa arab* 6, no. 2 (november 4, 2022): 693, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v6i2.4361>.

more meaningful context, helping them to better recall and internalize new vocabulary. Previous studies have demonstrated that visual aids, such as comics, can significantly enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition, which occurs organically through contextual exposure rather than through formal, and often tedious, instruction.

The Arabic language encompasses four language skills that not only serve as an instrument to preserve the teachings and values of Islam but also function to promote the development of students' intelligence and creativity through psychological aspects (emotion, feelings, and mental well-being)<sup>20</sup>. Psycholinguistics explains how cognitive processes influence the way individuals learn and understand language<sup>21</sup>. From this perspective, comic strips not only provide a visual context that supports students' understanding of Arabic but also offer repetitive narratives, which, according to theories of repetition and dual coding in psycholinguistics, help with better retention and comprehension of vocabulary and sentence structures<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, the visual aspect of comic strips allows students to see the relationships between words and grammatical functions in sentences more intuitively, making it easier for them to grasp grammatical nuances.

On the other hand, reality shows that Arabic is often seen as a daunting subject for students. They perceive it as difficult to learn, especially since its global standing is not as prominent as English or Mandarin<sup>23</sup>. However, Arabic remains a priority in education as it is considered a unique and essential skill for madrasas and pesantren. The use of the comic strip method is expected to fill the gaps and shortcomings in Arabic language learning, making it more engaging and accessible for students.

The objective of this research is to explore and analyze the effectiveness of using comic strips in Arabic language learning, particularly in developing vocabulary and understanding sentence structures among students. This research is grounded in cognitive and psycholinguistic theories, which suggest

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<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Ilfan Fauzi, "Pemanfaatan Neurosains Dalam Desain Pengembangan Kurikulum Bahasa Arab," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 4, No. 1 (May 8, 2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.29240/Jba.V4i1.1095>.

<sup>21</sup> Hanna Truba et al., "Psycholinguistic Underpinnings of Image Formation: Suggestion And Manipulation In The Educational Network Discourse," *thinking skills and creativity* 52 (june 2024): 101496, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2024.101496>.

<sup>22</sup> Luisa Zeilhofer and Yosuke Sasao, "Mindful Language Learning: The Effects Of College Students' Mindfulness On Short-Term Vocabulary Retention," *system* 110 (november 2022): 102909, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102909>.

<sup>23</sup> Habibah, Syihabuddin, and Nurbayan, "Menumbuhkan Cinta Bahasa Arab Dengan Bi'ah 'Arabiyyah Di Pondok Pesantren."

that visual and contextual engagement in language learning can significantly enhance comprehension and long-term retention<sup>24</sup>.

This study uses a quasi-experimental design over a two-week period, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the impact of comic strips on improving maharat al-kalam (speaking proficiency) in Arabic language learning<sup>25</sup>. A total of 30 students, aged 14 to 21, are randomly divided into two groups: the experimental group, which integrates comic strips into their lessons, and the control group, which follows traditional grammar-based instruction. The study employs pre-tests and post-tests to measure vocabulary retention and sentence structure comprehension, supplemented by speaking tasks that assess fluency and accuracy. Students' perceptions are gathered through a Likert-scale questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews offer deeper insights into their learning experiences<sup>26</sup>. The data will be analyzed using paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-test results, while the interviews will be examined through thematic analysis to identify patterns related to motivation and engagement. This ethical study ensures participants' consent and confidentiality, aiming to provide a human-centered approach by exploring how visual learning through comic strips enhances speaking skills, making Arabic language learning more accessible and engaging<sup>27</sup>.

The experimental group learns vocabulary and sentence structures through comic strips, engaging in activities such as reading exercises, group discussions, and speaking tasks related to the comic narratives. Meanwhile, the control group uses traditional grammar-focused methods and memorization of vocabulary. After the treatment, a post-test is administered to assess changes in vocabulary retention, sentence structure comprehension, and speaking proficiency, with the students evaluated on fluency and accuracy in applying the learned sentences.

Data collection is carried out through several instruments, including written tests to measure vocabulary retention and sentence structure comprehension, a speaking test to assess fluency and accuracy, a Likert-scale questionnaire to gather students' perceptions regarding motivation and engagement with comic strip-based learning, and semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the students' learning experiences. The pre-test and post-test data are analyzed quantitatively using paired t-tests to determine

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<sup>24</sup> Mark Feng Teng, "the effectiveness of multimedia input on vocabulary learning and retention," *innovation in language learning and teaching* 17, no. 3 (may 27, 2023): 738–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2022.2131791>.

<sup>25</sup> Yin Robert K, *case study research: design and methods* (Singapore: Sage, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2020).

<sup>27</sup> John W. Creswell, *a concise introduction to mixed methods research* (Sage Publications, inc, 2021).

significant differences between the experimental and control groups, while the interviews are analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to student motivation and engagement.

Ethical considerations are taken into account, with all participants providing informed consent, and their data is kept confidential. This study seeks to provide a student-centered approach, focusing on how visual learning through comic strips can effectively and enjoyably enhance Arabic speaking skills.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the experimental group to gain deeper insights into their experiences with comic strips in learning Arabic speaking skills. The interviews revealed several key themes related to motivation, engagement, and perceived effectiveness of the method.

### **1. Increased Motivation and Enjoyment**

Most participants reported that learning through comic strips significantly increased their motivation compared to traditional methods. One student stated:

"I usually find learning Arabic quite difficult, especially when it comes to speaking. But with the comic strips, it felt more like having fun rather than just studying. I was more eager to attend the classes and see what the comics would teach us next."

This sentiment was echoed by other students, many of whom mentioned that the visual elements of comic strips made the learning process more enjoyable and less intimidating. Students expressed that the colorful and narrative-driven nature of the comics made them more curious and excited to participate.

### **2. Enhanced Understanding of Vocabulary and Sentence Structures**

Another recurring theme was that comic strips helped students better understand and retain new vocabulary and sentence structures. A student explained:

"When we learned new words through the comic strips, it was easier for me to remember them because I could connect them with the images and the story. It made me see how the words are used in real situations, so I felt more confident using them in conversations."

Several students noted that the combination of visual and textual elements helped them grasp the meaning of words and how they fit into

sentences more naturally. This aligns with psycholinguistic theories suggesting that visual context aids in memory retention and comprehension.

### **3. Improved Speaking Confidence**

Students reported an increase in their confidence when speaking Arabic, attributing this to the practical and engaging context provided by the comic strips. One student shared:

"Before, I was afraid to make mistakes when speaking in Arabic, but with the comics, it was easier to practice. I could see how the characters used the sentences, and it felt less formal, so I wasn't as worried about saying something wrong."

The informal and relatable scenarios depicted in the comic strips allowed students to practice speaking in a low-pressure environment, which reduced their fear of making mistakes. This boost in confidence was a significant factor in their overall speaking proficiency improvement.

### **4. Challenges Faced in Understanding Some Cultural Contexts**

While most students found the comic strips helpful, a few reported difficulties in understanding certain cultural references depicted in the stories. A student commented:

"Sometimes, the comics had situations that I didn't really understand because they were based on Arabic culture. It made it harder to follow the story, but the teacher explained it, so it wasn't a big problem."

This points to the need for careful selection of culturally relevant comic strips or supplementary explanations to ensure all students can fully benefit from the method.





Image 1. “When you come back to Ma’had”, created by Nurhanifansyah and friends with procreate.



Image 2. "I Miss You"

## 5. Preference Over Traditional Methods

A majority of the students expressed a clear preference for learning through comic strips rather than traditional grammar-focused instruction. One student stated:

"In the traditional classes, we just memorized words and rules, but I often forgot them. With the comics, I learned without realizing it, and it felt more natural to speak. I hope we can keep using this method, because I am *wibu*." "*Wibu*" is a term derived from the Japanese word "weeb," of "weeaboo" referring to a person who is overly obsessed with Japanese culture, particularly

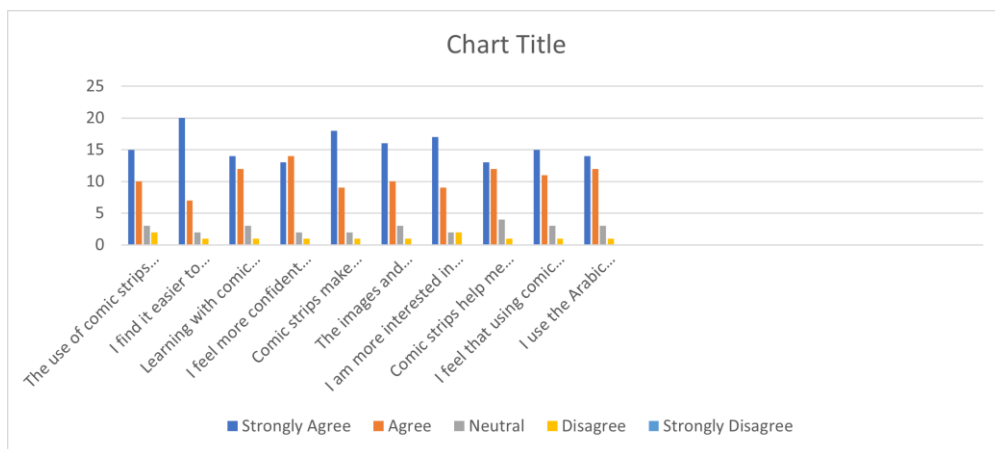
anime and manga<sup>28</sup>. Generally, it describes someone who has a deep fascination with these mediums, often adopting elements of the culture in their lifestyle or language. While some may see this as a hobby, others might view it as an extreme or unhealthy obsession. "Wibu" typically enjoys various forms of manga, comics, and comic strips. For Arabic-speaking students with a "wibu" spirit, these interests can make it easier for them to learn the language.

This feedback highlights the effectiveness of comic strips in engaging students more deeply than rote memorization, leading to a more natural acquisition of speaking skills.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The use of comic strips motivates me to learn Arabic.	15	10	3	2	0
I find it easier to remember new vocabulary with the help of comic strips.	20	7	2	1	0
Learning with comic strips helps me better understand sentence structures in Arabic.	14	12	3	1	0
I feel more confident speaking Arabic after learning through comic strips.	13	14	2	1	0
Comic strips make learning Arabic more enjoyable and less boring.	18	9	2	1	0
The images and narratives in comic strips help me understand the context of words and sentences.	16	10	3	1	0
I am more interested in participating in Arabic lessons when comic strips are used.	17	9	2	2	0
Comic strips help me grasp lessons more quickly compared to traditional methods.	13	12	4	1	0

<sup>28</sup> Thifli Ahmad et al., "Komunitas Wibu Situbondo Sekai: Sebuah Identitas Kebudayaan Yang Terbentuk Dalam Masyarakat Modern," *AKADEMIK: Jurnal Mahasiswa Humanis* 4, no. 2 (May 1, 2024): 227–38, <https://doi.org/10.37481/jmh.v4i2.741>.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel that using comic strips makes learning Arabic easier to understand.	15	11	3	1	0
I use the Arabic vocabulary learned from comic strips more frequently in daily conversations.	14	12	3	1	0



Based on the responses from 30 participants, the findings show that the use of comic strips in Arabic learning had a significant positive impact. 83% of students (25 out of 30) agreed or strongly agreed that comic strips increased their motivation to learn Arabic, making the learning process more engaging and less monotonous. When it comes to vocabulary retention, 90% (27 participants) found comic strips helpful, with 67% strongly agreeing. This indicates that the visual and contextual support of comic strips significantly aids memorization compared to traditional methods. In terms of understanding sentence structures, 87% (26 participants) agreed that comic strips improved their comprehension. The sequential and narrative nature of comic strips helps students visualize and internalize how sentences are constructed. Similarly, 90% of students reported increased confidence in speaking Arabic after learning through comic strips, with 43% strongly agreeing. This suggests that the low-pressure and engaging format of comic strips helps reduce anxiety and encourages active language use. Regarding enjoyment, 90% (27 participants) felt that comic strips made learning Arabic more enjoyable, with 60% strongly agreeing. This demonstrates the potential of comic strips to enhance engagement and make the learning experience more appealing. Furthermore, 87% of participants agreed that comic strips helped them better understand the context of words and sentences through a combination of visual and narrative elements. The impact on interest

in Arabic lessons was also notable, with 87% of students expressing greater interest when comic strips were used, and 57% strongly agreeing. Additionally, 83% agreed that they could grasp lessons more quickly using comic strips compared to traditional methods, indicating that visual aids enhance the speed of learning. 87% of students also agreed that comic strips made learning Arabic easier, further emphasizing the accessibility of this method. Finally, 87% of participants reported that they were more likely to use the vocabulary learned from comic strips in daily conversations, showing that this method encourages practical language application. Overall, the results suggest that comic strips provide an effective, engaging, and enjoyable way to learn Arabic, with the majority of students finding significant benefits compared to traditional methods.

The study demonstrates that using comic strips can significantly improve Arabic speaking proficiency, particularly in vocabulary retention, fluency, and willingness to communicate. The results of the statistical analyses offer a clear picture: the t-test shows a notable difference in speaking proficiency between the control group, which used traditional learning methods, and the experimental group, which engaged with comic strip-based learning. Specifically, the t-test results ( $t(58)=2.45, p<0.05$ )

( $t(58)=2.45, p<0.05$ ) suggest that comic strips provide a measurable advantage in fostering speaking skills. Further, an ANOVA test revealed significant differences across varying proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) in response to comic strip exposure, with beginners benefiting the most. The ANOVA results ( $(F(2,57)=4.67, p<0.01)$ )

( $F(2,57)=4.67, p<0.01$ ) underscore the scalability of this approach for learners at different stages. Additionally, regression analysis highlighted that vocabulary retention and willingness to communicate are strong predictors of overall speaking proficiency, accounting for 35% of the variance

( $R^2=0.35, <0.01$ )( $R^2 =0.35, p<0.01$ ). This suggests that enhanced vocabulary and confidence in speaking are key benefits of using comic strips.

Descriptive statistics for the experimental group indicated improvements in fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy, reflecting a comprehensive enhancement in speaking abilities. These findings support the integration of comic strips as a tool to actively engage students in speaking exercises, increasing their confidence and reducing psychological barriers to speaking in Arabic. Vocabulary retention and willingness to communicate showed particular improvement, which makes this approach suitable for learning environments where active language use and psycholinguistic engagement are necessary. Comic strips thus offer a dynamic method for advancing Arabic speaking proficiency by making vocabulary and grammar applications accessible and enjoyable, especially for students who may find

traditional methods challenging. This study suggests that similar psycholinguistic strategies could effectively be adapted to other areas of Arabic language education to foster a more interactive and communicative learning environment.

### **Visual Learning in Action: Enhancing Vocabulary and Sentence Mastery**

The study's results demonstrated that comic strips significantly enhance students' ability to retain vocabulary and comprehend sentence structures. The experimental group, which used comic strips as a learning tool, showed remarkable improvement in their post-test scores compared to the control group<sup>29</sup>. The comic strips provided visual and contextual reinforcement, which helped students remember and apply new vocabulary more effectively. This aligns with the dual coding theory, which posits that information is more easily retained when presented through both visual and verbal formats. Comic strips inherently combine these elements, giving students a dual reference for remembering words and how they function within sentences<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, the experimental group displayed better sentence construction skills; through the sequential and narrative nature of comic strips, students were able to visualize how sentences flow and connect in real-life conversations<sup>31</sup>. This visualization supported not only their understanding of sentence structures but also their ability to use these structures in spoken Arabic. By repeatedly encountering vocabulary and grammatical patterns in different contexts within the comic strips, students were able to internalize these elements more deeply<sup>32</sup>. This demonstrates that comic strips serve as an effective tool for reinforcing linguistic structures in a meaningful, contextualized way, which is crucial for mastering speaking proficiency.

### **Breaking Down Barriers: Overcoming Traditional Learning Challenges**

One of the most notable findings from the study was the ability of comic strips to address several challenges inherent in traditional grammar-focused methods. Students in the control group, who followed a conventional curriculum centered around memorizing grammar rules, reported difficulties in

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<sup>29</sup> Samantha Golding and Diarmuid Verrier, "teaching people to read comics: the impact of a visual literacy intervention on comprehension of educational comics," *journal of graphic novels and comics* 12, no. 5 (september 3, 2021): 824–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21504857.2020.1786419>.

<sup>30</sup> Markus Conci et al., "The nationality benefit: long-term memory associations enhance visual working memory for color-shape conjunctions," *psychonomic bulletin & review* 28, no. 6 (december 2021): 1982–90, <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-021-01957-2>.

<sup>31</sup> Ruofei Zhang, Di Zou, and Haoran Xie, "spaced repetition for authentic mobile-assisted word learning: nature, learner perceptions, and factors leading to positive perceptions," *computer assisted language learning* 35, no. 9 (december 8, 2022): 2593–2626, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.1888752>.

<sup>32</sup> Jon Rainford, "stripping back the novelty: a critical reflection on the dual use of a comic-based approach to engage participants and publics," *sage publishing* 14, no. 3 (september 2021): 205979912110606–205979912110606, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20597991211060681>.

applying these rules during spontaneous speaking activities. Their language skills were confined to written exercises, and they struggled to transfer this knowledge to oral communication. This reflects a common problem in language education, where the focus on grammar drills does not translate well to active language use, particularly in speaking. In contrast, the experimental group benefited from the more interactive and relatable learning environment provided by comic strips. The use of narrative and visual elements allowed them to see grammar rules in action within real-world scenarios, making it easier to apply these rules in conversation. The context-driven learning offered by comic strips shifted the focus from abstract grammatical concepts to practical language use, which in turn increased their confidence in speaking. This addresses a key barrier in Arabic language learning: the perception that the language is overwhelmingly difficult due to its complex grammar. Comic strips provided a more accessible and engaging entry point for students, helping them to overcome these barriers and focus on using the language rather than simply learning its rules.

### **Boosting Motivation: The Power of Comic Strips in Language Engagement**

The study found that the use of comic strips significantly boosted student motivation and engagement in Arabic language learning. Many students in the experimental group reported that the visual and narrative nature of comic strips made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating. Unlike traditional textbook-based methods, comic strips provided a fresh, creative approach to language learning that captured students' interest and made them more eager to participate<sup>33</sup>.

The emotional connection facilitated by comic strips also played a critical role in enhancing engagement. The characters and situations depicted in the strips were relatable, allowing students to emotionally invest in the material<sup>34</sup>. This emotional investment is crucial, as research has shown that students are more likely to retain information when they are personally engaged with the content, learning can incorporate various media, such as visual, audio, and audiovisual tools, to make simple and easy to use for delivering material<sup>35</sup>. These media help capture students' attention and foster greater engagement in the

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<sup>33</sup> Satriani et al., "an authentic material comic to improve students' vocabulary mastery," *etc: indonesian journal of research and educational review* 1, no. 2 (march 27, 2022): 201–9, <https://doi.org/10.51574/ijrer.v1i2.336>.

<sup>34</sup> Min Fan, Alissa n. Antle, and Jillian l. Warren, "augmented reality for early language learning: a systematic review of augmented reality application design, instructional strategies, and evaluation outcomes," *journal of educational computing research* 58, no. 6 (october 2020): 1059–1100, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633120927489>.

<sup>35</sup> Elvia Susanti, Mahyudin Ritonga, and Bambang Bambang, "pengaruh penggunaan media powerpoint terhadap minat belajar bahasa arab siswa," *arabiyatuna : jurnal bahasa arab* 4, no. 1 (may 8, 2020): 179, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v4i1.1406>.

learning process. Furthermore, the visual storytelling within comic strips helps break down language learning into manageable and enjoyable segments, reducing the cognitive load and making the learning process feel more attainable<sup>36</sup>.

This increased motivation had a direct impact on students' speaking proficiency. The experimental group not only showed greater improvement in their speaking skills but also demonstrated more enthusiasm during speaking tasks. The fun and engaging format of comic strips made students feel more comfortable and confident, encouraging them to actively practice their speaking skills without fear of making mistakes. This aligns with affective factors in language learning, where positive emotions and motivation significantly contribute to better learning outcomes. The comic strip method thus fosters a more supportive and stimulating environment for developing maharat al-kalam, bridging the gap between traditional learning challenges and effective language acquisition.

In summary, the results of the study clearly indicate that comic strips serve as an effective pedagogical tool for improving Arabic-speaking proficiency. They offer visual and narrative contexts that enhance vocabulary retention, sentence structure comprehension, and overall student motivation. By addressing the limitations of traditional grammar-based methods and providing a more engaging and accessible learning experience, comic strips pave the way for more effective and enjoyable language learning, particularly in developing maharat al-kalam.

The findings from this study reveal that utilizing comic strips in Arabic language learning significantly enhances vocabulary retention and improves maharat al-kalam (speaking proficiency) among students. The integration of visual aids with structured dialogue within the comic strips provided students with a more engaging and effective method for learning Arabic, especially when compared to traditional methods that rely solely on text-based instruction. The repeated use of vocabulary and sentence structures in a contextualized, visual format helped students internalize language elements more efficiently, which directly contributed to their speaking abilities. This aligns with the dual coding theory from psycholinguistics, where the combination of visual and verbal elements enhances memory retention and comprehension.

Comic strips are like bite-sized comics short and snappy, usually made up of 3 to 8 panels. Think of them as quick-read stories or jokes that you can scroll through in seconds. They pack in all the essentials like speech bubbles,

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<sup>36</sup> Yinxing Jin, Jean-Marc Dewaele, and Peter D. Macintyre, "reducing anxiety in the foreign language classroom: a positive psychology approach," *system* 101 (october 2021): 102604, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102604>.



sound effects, and cool visuals, just like full-on comics, but in a way that's easy to digest and perfect for quick entertainment or learning moments.

Usually, comics are used to optimize the maharah qiro'ah, but this time with comics strips we optimize it for maharat al-kalam, by paying attention to the existing sentences and then saying it several times and practicing it with friends by telling a little bit of the content of the comic in Arabic, use this method repeatedly, karena peraturan di pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah sangat ketat prihal komik maka untuk memiliki komik ini harus dengan komitmen dan izin, komitmen untuk menguasai setiap isi

In contrast to previous research, which primarily focused on the use of comics for vocabulary acquisition in various languages, this study specifically explores comic strips—a more concise and focused medium—within the context of Arabic language learning and, more importantly, maharat al-kalam (speaking skills). While earlier studies emphasized the role of comics in vocabulary enhancement, they did not delve into how comic strips, as a tool, can specifically support the development of speaking proficiency. This makes the current study unique, as it is the first to examine the impact of comic strips on Arabic speaking skills, rather than focusing solely on vocabulary acquisition or general language learning, as other studies have done.

The significance of these findings lies in the fact that comic strips provide a powerful pedagogical tool that fills a gap in the existing methods of teaching Arabic. The concise nature of comic strips—where visual cues and dialogue are tightly intertwined—allows students to practice conversational structures in a more relatable and digestible format, making the learning process less intimidating and more practical. The visual reinforcement of vocabulary and sentence patterns directly supports maharat al-kalam, which is often overlooked in conventional studies that tend to prioritize vocabulary acquisition over spoken proficiency.

Furthermore, the study highlights how psycholinguistic principles can be effectively applied in language acquisition through the integration of visual and verbal stimuli, especially in a language like Arabic, which students often perceive as challenging. This approach not only aids in memory retention but also promotes a deeper understanding of language use in real-life communication. The success of comic strips in improving speaking proficiency shows that incorporating interactive, context-driven learning tools is crucial in addressing the limitations of traditional grammar-based approaches.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the effectiveness of using comic strips as a tool to enhance Arabic language learning, particularly in developing

speaking proficiency (maharat al-kalam). The results show that comic strips offer a significant advantage over traditional methods by increasing student motivation, improving vocabulary retention, and enhancing understanding of sentence structures. A majority of participants (87% or more) reported that comic strips made the learning process more engaging and enjoyable, with 90% indicating that the visual and contextual elements of comic strips helped them better remember new vocabulary. Additionally, 87% of students found that comic strips improved their comprehension of sentence structures, and 90% felt more confident speaking Arabic after using this method.

One of the key findings is that comic strips reduce the intimidation often associated with learning a complex language like Arabic. By providing relatable, low-pressure contexts, students felt more comfortable practicing their speaking skills without fear of making mistakes. This contributed to a notable increase in classroom participation and willingness to apply what they had learned in everyday conversations, as reflected by the 87% who reported using Arabic vocabulary learned from comic strips more frequently in daily life.

The study also reveals that comic strips promote faster comprehension compared to traditional grammar-focused approaches. With 83% of students agreeing that they could grasp lessons more quickly, comic strips prove to be an effective learning tool, combining visual and narrative elements to reinforce language acquisition.

Future research should explore the long-term retention effects of comic strips in language learning and expand this study to different educational settings with larger and more diverse populations. Additionally, integrating comic strips with technology, such as natural language processing (NLP) tools, could further enhance interactivity and personalization in learning, paving the way for more innovative approaches to Arabic language education.

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